

Endicott Young Writer Series Anthology of Poems and Stories:

What the Mirror Sees

For Doug Holder and his late wife Dianne Robitaille

We would like to thank Doug Holder for his tireless dedication to the writers and students at Endicott College. This community of young writers continues to grow, develop, and thrive following his wisdom, talent, and support.

We would also like to thank Dianne Robitaille. Dianne wasn't just an accomplished poet, photographer, nurse, and co-founder of *Ibbetson Street Press*—she was, and always will be, an inspiration to all of us. She lives on in the way Doug teaches, writes, and continues on in his day-to-day life.

Because of both Dianne and Doug, new voices have the chance to be heard and celebrated.

Acknowledgments:

Cover art by George Rosatone

Edited by Emily (Pineau) Lacey

Coordinated by Dan Sklar

Founders of the Ibbetson Street Press Young Writer Series: Doug Holder and Dan Sklar

Note from the editor:

This anthology is a collection of young writers who are exploring the world around them and discovering how they fit. College years are both a time to reflect and to look to the future—it is difficult to navigate the “in between” and live in the moment. Creative writing bridges that gap and gives us a moment to pause. These college students write beyond their years, their stories and poems serving as a mirror to their souls. We hope these thought-provoking and transformative pieces help you pause and step outside of yourself.

Doug Holder and Dan Sklar founded The Young Writer Series in 2013, and because of this program, a student is able to have a chapbook published every semester at Endicott College. This semester we wanted to give students the opportunity to be a part of a collection of work that illustrates the young adult experience, exploring subjects such as heartbreak, finding yourself, and wanting to belong. Young voices, such as these, are important to be heard.

—Emily (Pineau) Lacey

Braids and Jokes

Priscilla Miller

I can't say it's annoying
but it is tiring
explaining the braid take-down process,
me washing my hair every two weeks
how it takes an hour minimum each time

Or how my braids can go from blonde
to black
to white.
Explaining that those were locs not braids

Explaining that "no I didn't dye my hair"
that "no I didn't cut my hair"
that "no this is not my hair"

In the same way it is tiring to try to be funny amongst these people
to *crack* jokes
to "oh nah"
to "that's mid"
to "you're mad wild for that"
to "that's mad treacherous"
It's tiring when these things are met with silence
with awkward smiles
with chuckles of those who can tell it's supposed to be funny but can't tell why
Yea, it kills the vibe
Oh sorry
It ruins the atmosphere of the room
This room,
Your room
that does not have enough space for me.
Your room reminds me that this is no place for me to get comfortable.
No place for me to take my shoes off at the front door.
This is no space for me,
and y'all ain't my friends.

Self-love

Taylor Gorlick

Enough of watching the moon and stars, of pointing out shapes in the clouds,
of kindness from strangers.

Enough of daily horoscopes, of collecting beach glass,
of laughing until your stomach hurts.

Enough of that feeling when you watch your favorite movie.

Enough of trips to the lighthouse, of spontaneous night drives,
of buying new plants for your room even though you already have so many.

Enough of hugging your favorite person after not seeing them for a while.

Enough of that feeling of putting comfy clothes on after a long day.

All for you to look in the mirror and say, "I love you."

Enough of saying you're fine when you're really not.

Enough of people-pleasing and saying yes when all you want to do is say no.

Enough of the need to make your bed each morning, enough of
hundred-dollar skin care routines that don't work.

Enough of expensive iced coffees

that no longer look like coffee by the time you add all the extra shit to them.

Enough of wanting someone who doesn't want you.

Enough of not wanting you for you.

Enough of the feeling that you are not enough.

All for you to look in the mirror and say, "I love you."

What the Goddess Left Behind

Arden Norian

Three is an age to bumble around;
to figure out the world,
to unwittingly expand your synaptic connections—
to be held in your mother's arms.
It's surely not an age to drink coffee.
But what if it's the sweet, beige-white,
almost-mouthful of the last drops of that
extra-milk, extra-sugar ambrosia?
Not a drink of the gods,
but of the one goddess.

The goddess who left when you were five.
The goddess who was killed.
The immortal die when their domain is defamed.
When medical malpractice mangles
a mother's abdomen,
is not the domain that she rules over
destroyed?
Fifteen years later,
you're first told the harrowing story
of an evil doctor
who killed a goddess.

Fifteen years later,
you sip on homemade coffee.
Not extra-extra,
that's too sweet.
Especially when you thought that
the infected scar was the route you took
out of your mother and into this world.
You don't want any more longevity
from drinking that ambrosia.

The Garage

Giovanna Limoli

The garage in my home is stained with the smell of cigarettes, the pores of the walls soak in the smoke of burning tobacco every day for the past 20 years. There are paintings and photos of people we don't know, but my father told me once that they're "lucky," so we keep them up.

We have a separate kitchen in the garage that's used only when we host in the big backyard with the pizza oven. For now, it holds the overflow of unused children's cups and bowls, along with the endless cabinets of forgotten pots and pans.

The kitchen keeps getting bigger, extending into the dining room for "more storage space," though there will ever be enough room for the take-out containers we get on Friday nights that my mother refuses to throw away. The fridge is too small now for four adults with individual shopping lists. The white one in the garage is strictly for beer and wine.

The living room has a new couch set, again. Hopefully, this one doesn't break too fast, having to support the weight of my father's daily naps when he comes home after plastering and putting up blue boards from 5 AM to 5 PM, even on Saturdays. The bookcase holds all the family videos, photo albums, and a collection of Disney movies on DVDs and VCR tapes. There is not enough room for them all, so the rest go in a tote that stays in the garage along the wall with our luggage that has to see the light of day at least once a year.

The heart of the house is in the garage. It's where my brother and I can always find my parents, smoking at the small round table. We stop to say goodbye on our way out and stop to say hello on our way in. It's where my childhood is all packed up into a box or on display for us to remember. Like the row of every soccer ball and every pair of cleats my brother has ever used in his time playing. Like the red, green, and yellow plastic drawers I used to hold my toys in labeled, "rad," "gren," and "yellow," in Sharpie after learning how to sound things out. The garage holds the overflow of things that have accumulated throughout our 20 years of living on Roosevelt Ave. There isn't enough space to hold the memories we've made thus far, but I'm sure we'll find a spot.

New England Weather

Julia Battistoni

The sunrise approaches the East,
while the robins begin their feast.
30 degrees is the normal chill,
warm weather creeps into the day till—
the frost comes back,
coupled with the blanket of the night, black.
The thought of spring is ever changing,
the New England folks' hopes are gradually fading.

Why do we live here?
Entertaining the continuous fear,
of summer never arriving,
are we really thriving?

The End of Happy Things

Caitlin O'Keefe

Enough of the sunshine on my skin, snowfall on
Christmas mornings, hearing a baby's laughter
and happily ever after.

Enough of love at first sight, mom's homemade
cooking, seeing my favorite color,
and the relief from a tight hug at the end
of a bad day.

Enough of wearing my favorite socks,
the comforting feeling of my favorite teddy bear,
seeing cardinals in my yard,
and hearing the words "I love you."

Enough of watching my favorite movie on repeat,
no more cleaning out the house.

I am human and I am heartbroken.

Enough of the years passing by without you.

I am asking for one last goodbye.

A Daughter's Truth

Nina Brockmann

I come from a mother who dreamed of me since she was a child, a mother who learned how to love unconditionally from being unloved,

a woman who broke her back, ankles, and knees to give her two children a safe and happy home.

Becoming the oddball of the family, by giving her children everything she wasn't given.

I come from a drunk and malicious man whose cursed words haunt me even on the brightest of days, whose broken footsteps are still cemented in the ground

Being treated like the black sheep of the family simply for me not being who he wanted me to be.

I come from a little town where no one's secrets are safe from the town's loudmouths and gossiping soccer moms

who don't care where their words are heard or who their spoken knives wound. Carelessly objectifying anyone in their way.

I come from men who think breaking a girl's heart is the worst pain a girl can feel, not acknowledging

how their 'meaningless' sex and horrible words they utter don't wound our souls, how broken promises don't leave broken hearts, they leave deep wounds that don't fully scar over, rather they get deeper with every uttered syllable.

I come from a woman who proudly and loudly celebrates who she is, who encourages me to do

the same, learning from her rather than those people who wound my soul, learning early that broken words leave deep scars, but unconditional love heals those deepest of wounds.

I come from love.

Beauty

Miriam Fenster

Once in a while,

I will look in the mirror.

It will erase my previous beliefs about myself.

The bitter taste of bile will rise again.

I will only look for a second,

anger and disgust permeate my brain,

toxic feelings overwhelm my senses.

I hate the way I look.

Stretch marks mar my stomach,

pale skin reaching across the vast canvas of my body,

the jiggle when I move or the big clothes I must wear to hide.

There is no love here.

I will look in the mirror.

It will erase my previous beliefs about myself.

A smile will brighten my face.

I will look for a bit and see things I hadn't before.

Pride and fulfillment permeate my brain.

Happiness runs through me like a waterfall.

I love the way I look.

Rosy painted cheeks, full and bright,

strong arms, big and capable of carrying a heavy load.

Thick legs that hold up the masterpiece that has been through a lot.

A full stomach that has been told no less than it has been told yes.

There is only love here.

Just Hear Us
Priscilla Miller

I feel a certain type of anger when we teach these white kids our black pain.
A very conflicted anger when these white professors assign us someone's eulogy.
someone's dead son,
someone's last words
and force us to break it down
to splinter its content
because, I guess, just reading their pain doesn't make sense?
because we, no, they, need to learn what is, very clearly, on the page?
because their white glasses need a new lens
in order to vaguely grasp the idea of black pain?
Because I grew up in a bubble but still understood black pain.
Because I've never lost someone to these cold streets but still text my brother to "stay safe."
Because black people and their black guns were a problem,
But these white cops and their blue flags are not?
Because you always say, "I can't believe something like this *happened*
... in the past"
Because this is still happening
Because some don't even know the word reparations and expect us to forgive them
Because this White America stumbles between "they" and "we" as if this is not their fault
Because you watch the movies and the shows
Because you listen to the music and the poems
Because for some reason they think when the curtain closes it's all over
Because you don't understand that this isn't a show
Because you don't understand that there are no editors to bring these people back from their
graves
Because we still have to quiet our cries for you to hear us
Take the cotton out your ears and hear us
You see our riots in your broken streets and change the channel
You hear about the war amongst our people and forget to apologize
You did this to us
We have internalized your hate for us
We have lived in the places you left in shambles for us
We fought your wars and you pillaged our towns
We taught you to stay alive and you drowned our people
You have killed us
and killed us
and killed us.
Get a new hobby.

You love to joke that black people can't swim
when we have died in your waters
when we have been forgotten in your lakes

when we have waded through your rivers.

You love to joke about our Houdini fathers
when you tied them down in your chains
when you have whipped them with your words
when you have called them “boy” and stole their pride
or their life

You love to joke about black pain.
Come, let me teach you just how funny it is.
I will give you our fear
I will give you our pain
I will kill your children
I will lock you up and steal your name
I will laugh and spit in your face when you say it hurts
or possibly that you can’t breathe
I will rape your women, and beat them too
I will give you my scraps and you will learn why salt and pepper don’t work
I will introduce you to drugs then call you a crackhead
I will take your money and burn down everything you love.
Put lead in your pipes.
Cheap out on your safety because who cares if you die.
Rile you up then turn your anger into target practice.
“It was an accident” and get away scot-free.
Oh yes, I will give you our anger
and when you ask for help
when you say this is too much to bear
when you say you’re human too
I will tell you the wait time is approximately 500 years and hang up.
And then,
maybe then,
you will understand our pain.

The permanent ramifications of a temporary rainstorm over Harrisburg, Pennsylvania years prior

Koby Hirschaut

The brick wall across from the hospital window he was waiting next to had been haphazardly splashed red and people were milling about it. He and everyone on the outside all shared the same thought process: What must it take to die like that?

While he continued staring, he heard vaguely through his right ear, which was angled away from the large bay windows, the sounds of idle chatter and bodies being summoned from behind the large oak doors, vague jumbles of names that bounced off of the bright white tile and slipped into his brain, then just as quickly, dripped out of his temple, never to return.

As he was looking out the window, he put his thumb and index finger on each hand in such a position so as to form half of the possible corners of a rectangle. He squinted an eye and positioned the shape over the wall, covering up the people observing from both sides. He couldn't remember the name of that ink blot test that those suited folks gave you; the suited folks that tell you how your childhood is adversely affecting your day to day. Though he was unable to recall the name of that test, he thought that this abstract splash of crimson upon the faded red of the bricks looked very much like that.

He heard his name then, the deep voice of the man that claimed to be his son. "OK, Dad, it's time to go. Doctor says she wants you back in two weeks for another checkup, OK?" The old man nodded idly, not losing his vision of the wall. "What are you doing?" the younger man said to him. He saw the wall then. "Oh, dear. Shame what the world is coming to. Though I suppose there are worse places for it, across from a hospital, huh. Has to be someone's lucky day." The last sentence came out through young, grinning lips, though the older man still didn't turn away. Young hands tapped old shoulders, which was the cue to get a move on.

When they emerged into the fall air, the crowd at the wall was moving along, soon this day would be a memory of a memory. The world was beginning its yearly decay and the one called father noticed the first raindrops then: a twinkling on his nose at first, then a repetitive patter on the rapidly opening umbrellas and parking meters. The older man didn't mind though, he loved the rain. It reminded him of a day long before; a day he assumed was in his youth. The blacktop only darkened further as the storm rapidly rolled over. It was early summer then. The scent of young lilac and the sound of the clouds rumbling filled the once young man with an unplaceable sense of comfort. This day was home once. The way that the sky had become congested with gray clouds of multiple shades and eventually filled to burst, drowning a constantly growing earth, filled him with a familiarity. These summer rains lasted only long enough for one to take in the small beauties that came with them. The droplets parading through the leaves and onto the cobblestone paths sounding very much like drums, rapidly beating a rhythm that pulled the sun through the sky, behind the curtains of grey. God, the once young man loved the rain.

“You know, I offered to get you your umbrella Dad. You’re far too stubborn, but now we both know whose intuition to trust, eh?” The father felt vaguely like he was being patronized. He also felt, distantly, that he should be offended by that, but his brain was rolling down the faded marble stairs of days long gone. Days that would soon be even farther from reality than they are. Stairs that were beginning to crack at the corners. He couldn’t bring himself to speak, he couldn’t combine the right letters and words to form the correct sentence that properly enunciated that he felt very much like he was drifting through the late afternoon of his life, unable to tell which direction would lead him properly.

“You’re quiet today, everything OK?” The old man felt and knew that the now young man was reaching out to him, attempting to guide him the right way. The now old man nodded and smiled, happy to enjoy the rain, not able to place where the impending sense of dread began. It was building like bile right above his stomach, a wave of a shadow crawling with thousands of hangnails into his brain, kidnapping familiarity, murdering reason, eviscerating personhood. He recognized the man next to him.... didn’t he? He recognized the younger man’s nose, because it was his. He also noted the way the younger man’s hair curled at the base of his neck, a trait they shared when reviewing the younger photos of the now old man.

The streets were coated now. The old man loved the rain, however. His mind went backwards then. A vision of a vision. The storm was quick that day. There were black spots growing and breathing next to the clouds, but the once young man didn’t mind. The rain still jumped from branch to branch. The ground still held drums. The rhythm remained. But the drums were distant now. The ground swallowed them, it seemed. They were echoes. No, echoes of echoes. A sound bounced off of the wall of the old man’s brain, lighter and less perfect. There was less harmony. This made the old man sad. The memory was dripping, losing color, losing focus. The gaps in the brain, in his brain, were becoming larger. The dread was back. The scraping of muddy fingernails was picking away at the memory. The scraps were falling like leaves past the old man’s outstretched fingers. The memory was eating itself. It seemed to him that his mind was eating itself. The sky folded. The drums remained, discordant and sparse.

The old man stepped back into the rain pounding his thinned hair. He had been asked a question. The now young man was staring at him, slightly frowning, though the now old man was unsure of why. Maybe age had weathered the definition of recognition. Maybe the clouds would clear. “What’s on your mind, Dad? You stopped walking. You’re going to get soaked.” The older man just grinned, the face of the young man staring at him held no rhyme, no reason. Though he did recognize how large the young man’s nose was, which made him chuckle. “Something funny?” The older man heard drums. He felt the rain tickling his upturned palms. He looked upwards. The fall was here. The old man loved the rain.

Found

Emma Nyangwara

This morning I found an artifact of our old life in the pocket of my jeans
The air is much crisper than it was in the spring

A pair of briefs laundered and folded into a little square
Still cold and fresh as a freshwater lake

How I forgot them in your flat I have no clue
The leaves drift further and further from their mother oak

But I'd like to thank you, from across the world, for treating us with care
Now I'm warm, the sun is warm, and so are you

Before I woke you placed them there for me, you knew I'd think of you
Earth spins mindlessly, unaware of her impact and yours

And I did.

Rush

Emma Nyangwara

Desire is sweet.

It is sticky.

I am stuck.

Desire is a second-hand sucker,
less sugar, less cherry, more you.

Feed me the cellophane wrapper that once lay between us

I have no shame.

The Problem

Carly Steinbrick

I have a problem. It's a serious problem and it needs to be fixed, like, immediately. I'm not like this. Ever. I don't get crushes, I do my work and I keep my head down. I breeze through life unnoticed by most. Or at least that's how it was until he walked into my life. I ran into him, like actually like full force ran into him. It's not my fault! I was late and he stopped short in the middle of the hallway, but that's besides the point. I knocked him over and I, being the ever-embarrassing geek that I am, tried my best to apologize, mumbling and blushing like crazy. I just needed to get my things and get the hell out of there. But of course, I had to look up. Our eyes locked and I forgot where I was and what I was doing. They were the prettiest brown eyes I've ever seen. They were like amber almost, like caramel. They reminded me of fall and getting all cozy cause it's cold outside. They were so warm and inviting, like home. And so of course I stood there, mouth slack, like a complete idiot just staring at him for way longer than socially acceptable. He handed me my stuff and said something, I have no idea what, I just ripped my things from his hands, mumbled another apology, and walked out of the building. I didn't even go to class, I just walked. I live, like, a two-minute walk from that academic building, but I just kept going. When I finally came back down to Earth, I realized I had no idea where I was. Turns out I was two towns over. I'd been walking for over an hour. It's a wonder I didn't get hit by a car.

...

Here's the thing about me. I keep to myself, a loner if you will. I'm the quiet kid, the invisible kid, the smart kid, you know the type. I have, like, one friend and that's about it. I don't like people all that much. They just end up leaving anyway. So, I don't trust anyone except for my best friend and I don't talk to people. I don't share and I sure as hell don't do feelings. I hold everyone but my best friend at arm's length so they can't see the real me. The broken, burnt-out "gifted" kid. I ran a few states over to go to college to get away from the constant academic pressure from my parents and the reputation of excellence I had in my small town. This was my chance to be who I wanted to be instead of what was expected of me. So of course, it was on my very first day of school when he came into my life.

...

Since that fateful first day, when this *problem* walked right into my life (and onto my foot) I see him everywhere. I swear he's doing it on purpose. He acts like we're friends now, he always waves at me and tries to, like, have conversations with me. Not just a simple "hello", no no no. He asks about my weekends, or what book I'm reading, or if I've seen any good movies recently. I don't know how to talk to people, especially not him. How am I ever going to survive this year? I'm already behind on studying because I can't focus. He's constantly on my mind and it's so annoying. I don't know how to make it stop. How do I stop thinking about someone I see every day?

...

He tells me I'm pretty and funny and that he's never met someone as smart as me. He laughs at my lame jokes and asks me for updates on what's going on in whatever book I'm reading at the time. He brushes the hair out of my face and tucks it behind my ear in such a gentle way it makes me melt every time. It's like he's actually trying to get to know me. He says and does all the right things at all the right times and he needs to *stop it*. Right. Now.

So, of course I can't stop thinking about him. And it just gets worse. He started sitting with me and inviting me to like parties and things and I wish he'd just stop. I don't know what he wants from me. He's confusing and I don't like things I can't understand. Why is he even talking to me? And why am I starting to enjoy, and long for, our little conversations? I don't like where this is headed. My best friend says the next time he invites me somewhere I should go, she thinks I need to get out more. I disagree. But I promised I'd humor her, I told her twenty minutes and then I'm gone. That seemed to satisfy her for now. So of course, just my luck, later that day he invited me to a party. Yay. I'm so excited.

...

I honestly didn't know what to expect, maybe music blasting so loud you can hear it before you can even see the building? Maybe a bunch of drunk kids stumbling about the house? Many unidentified stains on the walls and furniture? Sticky floors? You know, the basic college party you see in the movies. But that wasn't at all what this was. There was music, sure, but you couldn't hear it until you opened the door. And it was a really pretty, and well decorated, townhouse. Still on campus, just in an area I'd never been before. But it looked like adults lived there, like, it was clean and there was soft lighting and as soon as you stepped in your nose was graced with the most delicious smells ever. They were making a full meal, like grilled chicken and mashed potatoes and green beans. They were even making pie for dessert. Pie!

...

He introduced me to his friends and we stood around and chatted for a bit, about school, friends, just life in general. Then he went outside to the grill to help with the chicken. He said I could come with him, and as much as I wanted to, I was also really enjoying talking to one of his friends. We were just in the middle of a very deep conversation about how if goats from different regions have different accents, do other species also have accents? Interesting stuff, I know. We actually have a lot in common, and talking to her made all of this a lot less scary. So I stayed inside and chatted with her most of the night. He kept coming in and checking on me, but surprisingly I was actually enjoying myself. Huh.

...

Once everyone was sitting at the table, he served me dinner. This man really asked me what I wanted and used his long ass arms to get it all for me so I wouldn't feel awkward. He needs to stop making me like him. I don't do feelings, this is horrible. But then he does something like that, or he'll give me a soft smile and quietly grab my hand under the table and I can't help but feel. I like him and I like him a lot. And that's a problem. It feels like less of a problem when I'm with him, when he tells his friends stories about me and clues me into their inside jokes. But that makes it more of a problem! Ughhhh why does he have to be so perfect! He's just so observant and considerate and I've never met someone who pays as much attention to detail as I do. I've never had someone pay that much attention to me either. He just knows things about me and I don't know how. I try very hard to keep my stony barrier up with people. That way, I'm never disappointed. But he somehow found a weak point and has crawled right on in.

...

After dinner, when everyone moseyed back into the living room, they pulled out the board games. And they have Monopoly, hell yeah, that's my shit! We were all anxiously waiting on the pies to be done, they made several different kinds and they all smelled so good. *And* they got ice cream and cool whip to go on top. These are my kind of people.

The pies were FINALLY done, they'd been making my mouth water since the moment I walked in the door and ohmygosh I wanted a slice of every kind they made. There was pumpkin and

apple and pecan and cherry and key lime. So. Much. Pie. I went for the pecan cause I just couldn't resist and I put a nice little scoop of vanilla ice cream on top. He went for the classic apple pie "à la mode" as he says. The dork.

The pie was absolutely delicious but I couldn't eat another bite so I had to settle for just the slices of pecan and apple. But he said that he would make sure there would be more pie the next time I came over, so there's a plus.

...

I was surprised with myself; I didn't want to leave. I wanted to stay here in this moment with these people. It was perfect. It was the best night ever. But it seemed like people were going to be making their way home, grabbing jackets and putting on shoes. He asked if I was ready to leave—I wasn't but I didn't really have a choice. So, we said our goodbyes and headed out.

He walked me all the way back to my dorm, which was again surprising. I didn't think he would walk all the way back with me since he was already home. I figured he'd walk me to the door and send me on my way. But I was thankful for the company. Walking alone on campus at night is not fun. I didn't want to leave him yet though, I just wanted to be in his presence for a bit longer. Just a few more minutes.

All too soon we were at my dorm. I knew, I could just feel the tension—he wanted to kiss me and I wanted to kiss him. And when he did kiss me, it tasted like apple pie à la mode with vanilla creaminess melting in the pie heat. It was sweet and it was perfect and suddenly my problems didn't seem so bad. Maybe, just maybe, it wasn't a problem at all.

An Expensive Conversation with a Prostitute

George Rosatone

I told you how beautiful you looked
against my twin bed's burgundy sheets.
Your big blue eyes did a little somersault,
while the rest of your face stayed locked in place.

I told you about my job,
about how my boss hates me.
You lifted a gloved hand towards my face,
and checked the cheap watch glued to your wrist.

I told you about my dog,
how I wished he could talk to me.
You tugged on your fake gold necklace,
letting it charm out a faint sigh from your forbidden lips.

I asked you about your interests,
what you would do if you ran the world.
You stared at me for an unbearably long moment,
then told me that you appreciate tonight's easy money.

Kaleidoscope

Allie Hastings

Often, I've wondered
if I conjured up a false image
of who you actually were—
if I mistook you for a masterpiece,
when really you were just a kaleidoscope of
mismatched colors
the whole time

Me and Endicott

Priscilla Miller

It is a new feeling
This hidden alienation
This otherness crowed by others
My blackness
A new feeling
My blackness
The same blackness I have been living with for 19 years
Yes this blackness is new
This outlier
This uncommon denominator
I am not simply uncomfortable
or insecure
I am a black swan
in this white lake
and I can't tell if I can swim
and my wings seem tied together
for these are new waters
and the skies are polluted
These are new feelings
These are new faces
These are scary faces
These are the faces of people I see on TV,
and in movies,
and on the news.
These are the faces of those who killed us
I am beyond uncomfortable.
A person in a tank top in winter is uncomfortable.
I am naked.
There is nothing on me but my blackness.
My backward camouflage
my dark wings against these white tides
from once being the norm
to being a walking token.
I think I understand where they got the word minority from.
This empty, homelessness.
These people whose faces I will never remember.
This constant avoidance
for everything scares me.
This is college
and no one is at fault but this,
this is my Endicott

A Good Friend

Sadie Kermelewicz

As I'm waiting for our new cut paper to slowly leave the printer, my eyes close and my head falls forward, jolting me awake. Today has been a very slow day at work and on slow days I like to spend my time flipping through new magazines to keep up to date with celebrity drama. I sit in my office chair that has perfectly molded to my body shape, kick my feet up onto my stool, and I flip through the latest People magazine. Something catches my attention after flipping through the first few pages. My favorite celebrity and comedian, Kevin Hart, is front and center on page six with a title that reads "New Legs, Same Me." Kevin Hart goes on to share his story of his experience of receiving leg lengthening surgery. He traveled to Mexico to receive the leg lengthening surgery that he has been longing for his whole life. My enemy and co-worker Kyle enters my office with a pep in his step.

"Hey Marty whatcha up to?" Kyle says.

"Just flipping through the latest People, did you hear what Kevin Hart did to his legs?"

"Yes, actually I have. I think that's something you should invest in. I don't mean to hurt your feelings Marty, but you are known as the short salesman around here."

I choose not to answer Kyle and his hurtful words so instead I spin around in my office chair to face away from him. Kyle leaves but his words remain cluttering the room and I can't seem to think about anything else but the "short salesman" identity that has been given to me by my fellow co-workers. I am thirty-two years old but I still remain the same height as I was entering the eighth grade. I have always been five foot two inches and even though the only time I'm looking at myself is in a mirror, my height negatively affects me physically and emotionally every day. Personally, I think that I am a good-looking man but the one thing I am insecure about is my height. I look down at the stool my feet are resting on and sigh. If I move the stool my feet won't touch the ground. There are five minutes until I head home for the day. I decide that once I make it home I'm going to book a flight to Mexico and get that leg lengthening surgery. I deserve it. I get up from my cozy chair, pack up my bag, head out of my office, and make a pit stop at Kyle's desk.

"Hey Kyle, guess what I'm doing once I get home?"

"Uh I don't know, are you buying a new stool? Maybe a bigger one?"

"You're funny, Kyle," I say without a smile or even a grin, "I am going home to book a flight to Mexico to get leg lengthening surgery. I could be up to five foot seven!"

Kyle laughs at me but remains silent as he spins his chair back to face his computer and continues typing on his obnoxiously loud keyboard. The remnants of my smile fades and I walk back to my car thinking about how sorry Kyle is going to be once I am taller than him.

My roommate Brian is on the couch when I get home. I tell him the news with a wide

smile on my face and jittery hands. Brian, being a six-foot retired basketball player, says, “Why would you want to do that to yourself? I like the way you are now.”

Although that is one of the nicest things someone has ever said to me about my height, I want the surgery. I open my laptop and I find a plane ticket, a surgeon, and a recovery center. I write down all the costs of the trip and punch the numbers into my calculator. The total comes out to be over 100,000 dollars. For some reason I did not take into consideration that Kevin Hart, a celebrity with a net worth of over 200 million, was the one who received this surgery.

“Oh Marty, you can barely afford the groceries,” Brian says empathetically.

“Ughhhh,” I sigh and drop my head into the palms of my hands.

“Come on buddy, really think about this. I think that you are perfect just the way you are,” Brian says as he wipes at my tears.

Left to Lose

Allie Hastings

I don't want to lose who I am—
Sometimes, I catch a fragment of a song
a whisper in my head
or a glimpse of an old photograph
and I feel myself wavering,
itching to pick up the phone
and press "call," one more time.
I don't want to lose who I am,
and I know if I give life to these ashes
they'll crackle like embers,
sear my heart open,
and burn a hole right through the middle.
So I cannot continue to feed
fuel to the fire
because if I do that,
there will be no more of myself
left to lose.

Bios

Julia Battistoni is an Environmental Science major who has a particular interest in nature writing. She is enrolled in Professor Sklar's Nature Writing class and was inspired to create nature poetry. The New England weather is always changing, especially from the season changes so this was fun to write about.

Nina Brockmann is a senior at Endicott College majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. She is an artist outside of schoolwork, who is passionate about painting, drawing, and writing as an outlet. She is working to publish *Yellow*, a poetic memoir that she is doing for her senior thesis.

Miriam Fenster is a sophomore at Endicott College majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing.

Taylor Gorlick is a junior at Endicott College majoring in Criminal Justice. She enjoys writing poetry in her free time as well as spending time with friends, family, and her dogs.

Allie Hastings is a senior at Endicott College majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing and a minor in Communications. She values time spent with family and friends and appreciates all the blessings in her life. Her chapbook, *Querencia*, was published in 2018 by *Ibbetson Street Press*. Her short story "The Deceptive Nature of Love" was printed in Teen Ink's February 2018 issue. When she is not writing or reading, she enjoys listening to music, singing, playing the piano, doing yoga, and baking cupcakes.

Koby Hirschaut is a senior at Endicott College majoring in Creative Writing. In 2021, *Ibbetson Street Press* published his chapbook *Left on Read*. He has also been published in the *Salem News* as well as the Lyrical Somerville section of the *Somerville Times* and the *Endicott Review*. When he isn't writing, he loves listening to all sorts of music, reading, and participating at the drama club on Endicott's campus.

Sadie Kermelewicz is a Criminal Justice major at Endicott College and her interests include writing and going to the gym.

Giovanna Limoli is a junior at Endicott College majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. She's an aspiring young adult fiction author, currently working on her first novel. When she's not writing, she's either spending time with her family or doing SFX makeup looks.

Priscilla Miller, who sometimes goes by Cilla, is a sophomore at Endicott College. She is an English major with a concentration in Creative Writing. She has been writing for years but recently has started dabbling in a different type of poetry that she feels very passionate about and wants the world to know.

Arden Norian is a junior at Endicott College majoring in Creative Writing. Arden comes from Bellingham, Massachusetts where their high school English teacher, Mrs. Bergeron, encouraged

them to pursue writing as a career. They enjoy authors from Sanderson to Shakespeare and so many in between.

Emma Nyangwara is a graduating senior at Endicott College studying English with a concentration in Creative Writing. She is a short story writer who loves travel, theory, and blogging.

Caitlin O'Keefe is a 2022 graduate of Endicott College's Film Program. Growing up in the outskirts of Boston, she started writing in the 5th grade. She's always been a lover of books and the arts. Her dream in life is to write screenplays and produce movies for the silver screen.

George Rosatone is an author, filmmaker, and artist from Woburn, Massachusetts. He's published several collections of poetry and artwork, including *crowdsurfing* and *Gemini in Venus*, among others. Currently, George is wrapping up his four years as a student at Endicott College, where he is working on his first novel.

Carly Steinbrick is an English major with a concentration in Secondary Education. With hopes of being a high school English teacher, she also dreams of one day being a published author. For now, she enjoys writing in her free time.

Blurb:

The aim of this anthology is to give Endicott writers a chance to express their honest and deepest thoughts and feelings. You will find in this book the pain, joy, and love which are "the eternal norms of the human heart." You can hear their voices in lines like Taylor Gorlick's, "Enough of saying you're fine when you're really not," and Allie Hastings', "I don't want to lose who I am." You see their images in Priscilla Miller's, "No place for me to take my shoes off at the front door." And you can understand their hearts in "I feel a certain type of anger when we teach these white kids our black pain." In reading anything, what we are after is truth, sincerity, urgency, and energy in words. And here are the words in these stories and poems which observe, record, and report on the world as seen and felt by these writers in this place and at this time.

--Daniel Sklar, author of *Flying Cats (actually swooping)*.